SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT AND REPORTING DIVISION

ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL JURISDICTION 2000-2001 ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORTS

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This document is intended primarily for:
System and School Administrators
Alberta Learning Executive Team and Managers

And may be of interest to:
Teachers
Parents
Education Stakeholders
Community Members

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

School jurisdictions' are continuing to improve and refine their planning and reporting processes, including demonstrating stronger linkages with Ministry planning processes. Reporting of *provincial priorities* has further increased in comparison to previous reporting periods and reached almost 100%. The percentage of jurisdictions indicating improvement in provincial and local priority areas ranged from 45 to 84 percent, with maximum improvement in coordination of services for children and access to information technology (76 and 84 percent respectively) and minimum improvement in increasing high school completion rates (45 percent).

Reporting of the required student achievement measures either improved or stabilized around 90%, while reporting on local goals was somewhat lower in 2000-01 AERRs. In reporting on their assessment of results achieved for each provincial goal, the greatest improvements were reported for Goal 3 (Well Prepared Learners) and Goal 4 (Effective Working Relationships with Partners) (73 and 74 percent).

Local goals mentioned by jurisdictions included: (1) high quality of education and teaching; (2) safety, healthiness and supportiveness of schools' learning environments; (3) goals related to infrastructure and budgeting and (4) districts' responsiveness and accountability.

In their specific comments on the results achieved, jurisdictions identified the following issues/areas for improvement:

- improving quality of teaching and diversification of programming/courses to effect better student performance in junior high and high school, particularly in Grade 9;
- improving student performance in mathematics, particularly in high school;
- continuing to focus on improving achievement for specific groups of students;
- developing better measures and data collection with Alberta Learning, including better trend analysis; and
- addressing staff-related issues (i.e., recruitment/retention, maintaining high employee satisfaction and providing needed professional development).

Jurisdictions emphasized the following strategies for improving students' results and meeting students' needs: (1) analyzing and evaluating the results and creating action plans; (2) maximizing available resources through various initiatives and programs, including partnerships; and (3) providing various supports to teachers. Specifically for aboriginal students, jurisdictions stressed the important role of the Native Education Project (NEP) in providing various supports to students, their families and teachers.

Over half of jurisdictions perceived improvements for specific groups of students. School board representatives perceived AISI projects as the most successful (82% of jurisdictions indicated improvement achieved via these projects), followed by programs serving students with special needs (79%), Early Literacy programs (76%) and ESL programs (52%). However, formal program evaluation (MIRS reporting) remains a challenging area for school jurisdictions and Alberta Learning.

CEU administration generally lacks sufficient local oversight. Jurisdictions recommended that more advanced notification be given of changes in funding structures and more in-service support be provided by Alberta Learning for administration and auditing of CEU funding. In contrast, data on fiscal reporting revealed a high degree of compliance on the part of jurisdictions, but reporting requirements on capital projects should be clarified in the Guide as a first step to improving this reporting requirement.

Overall, this report demonstrates a continuing maturation of the Alberta Learning accountability framework for basic education, while identifying areas where reporting improvements are needed by a number of jurisdictions.

INTRODUCTION

School jurisdiction Annual Education Results Reports (AERRs) are reviewed and analyzed by Alberta Learning as a means to support three key purposes of accountability for basic education:

1) Support evaluation and reporting on goal achievement for basic education.
2) Support continuous improvement in basic education.
3) Align Ministry and jurisdiction planning and reporting and reinforce compliance with the fundamental accountability requirements.

The evaluation and reporting efforts of school jurisdictions are confirmed through a dialogue between the Field Services Branch and school jurisdiction central office administrators. Out of this dialogue the content, conclusions and themes detailed within this report are verified and any non-compliant issues are followed-up by Field Services. This report is the fifth in a series of AERR summary reports.

PROVINCIAL AND BOARD PRIORITY AREAS

Alberta Learning identified five priority areas for basic education in 1997 that have been consistent reporting expectations for school boards over the past four AERR reporting periods. The patterns of the School Board reporting of progress and accomplishments regarding these priorities and initiatives for 1997-1998 to 2000-01 are noted in Table 1. 'Percent Reported' represents the percent of school boards that complied with this reporting requirement. The increasing importance of the provincial priorities in school board reporting is evident in the trend data.

Table 1 – Provincial Priorities (n = 62 Jurisdictions in 2000-01)

	Percent Reported			
Priority Area	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-00**	**2000-01**
Secondary Math	73%	58%	82%	94%
High School Completion	78%	57%	87%	97%
Coordination of Services	75%	75%	86%	98%
Access to Technology	78%	75%	86%	98%
Public Satisfaction	N/A	62%	66%	98%
Board Identified Priorities*	58%	28%	68%	77%

*optional

School board staff were asked: what results do the measures indicate for the priority, what do your results tell you about this priority, and how can Alberta Learning help improve this priority? Responses to these questions are highlighted in Table 2. The responses to what results do the measures indicate for the priority represent a qualitative assessment, but may be based on a consideration of both qualitative and quantitative data.

Table 2 – Priority Area Results and Implications

Priority Area	Results (%)**	Implications
Improving Secondary Student Achievement in Math	Measures indicate Improvement = 68% No change = 14% Decline = 5 % Insufficient data = 10% No response = 3 %	• Most boards are continuing to analyze Math results and are placing a priority on improving junior and senior high Math achievement, often by emphasizing professional development for teachers; while 27 percent of boards reported satisfaction with progress achieved. • Assistance from Alberta Learning is most strongly felt for professional development and on-going research into Mathematics curriculum implementation, including review of curriculum design and consideration of more support/choice for grade 9/10 students struggling with math transition issues.
Increasing High School Completion Rates	Measures indicate Improvement = 45% No change = 15% Decline = 2% Insufficient data = 32% No response = 6 %	• School boards were split almost evenly with about half indicating they were pleased with preliminary results given the baseline nature of the data. The other half noted it is a continuing priority with significant and complex challenges. • Fifty-eight percent of boards indicated the Removing Barriers to High School Completion report was useful, confirming or supporting local analysis of barriers and complementing local planning efforts. • Key strategies being considered included providing students with greater program choice through Outreach programs or distance delivery, increased counseling supports, and establishing partnerships with business and expanding work experience or apprenticeship opportunities. • Sixty-five percent of boards reported that the provision of completion rates by Alberta Learning was useful and provided key insights. Some boards expressed interest in more comparative completion rate norms by school size, regions, and other student population parameters. Eighteen percent of boards believed the methods of rate calculation were either problematic or required further clarification. • The most frequent request for additional assistance from Alberta Learning (18%) centered on continued research and comparative data analysis into the early school leaver phenomenon.
Improving Coordination of Services for Children	Measures indicate Improvement = 76% No change = 13% Decline = 2% Insufficient data = 8% No response = 2%	• Sixty-three percent of boards reported this initiative is providing much needed supports to students or that it is working well with improving satisfaction levels. Twenty-six percent of boards commented that maintaining partnerships is challenging or that student needs exceed services available. • The biggest call for help in this priority centered on stabilizing the Student Health Initiative Program (SHIP) and reducing administrative requirements across health authority boundaries.
Improving Access to Information Technology	Measures indicate Improvement = 84% No change = 11% Decline = 2% Insufficient data = 2% No response = 2%	• Seventy-seven percent of boards noted that IT planning has helped keep schools current or implementation has been positive for program areas such as alternative programming. • The most frequent call for help was in the area of long range, stable funding and continued assistance with Supernet implementation.

Improving Public Satisfaction with Education	Measures indicate Improvement = 64% No change = 29% Decline = 3% Insufficient data = 2% No response = 2%	• A large majority of boards (87%) indicated the jurisdiction is doing well with this priority either meeting or exceeding satisfaction targets. • The most frequent suggestion to Alberta Learning was to create the message, "we're all in this together" via proactive good news stories, and generally improving communications from the Ministry, such as providing more advance notice of new developments.
Local Priorities (top three averaged)	Measures indicate Improvement = 50% No change = 6% Decline = 3% Insufficient data = 6% No response = 34%	• Local priorities mirrored provincial priorities in the areas of improving student achievement, improving student and parent satisfaction, and implementing technology, and reflected more local priorities in the areas of teacher professional development, strengthening Catholicity, ensuring safe and caring schools, facilities planning, and supporting early literacy. • Programs such as AISI and Early Literacy were frequently cited as supporting local priorities.

*note: Jurisdiction high school completion rates are now being provided by Alberta Learning to school boards on the basis of completion five years after entering grade 10. Provincial rates have been reported in the Alberta Learning Annual Report for a number of years.

** In some cases percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Summary

These results indicate that school board staff perceive the greatest successes are being achieved in the priorities of improving access to technology and improving coordination of services for children. Moderate improvements are noted in improving secondary mathematics achievement and improving public satisfaction with education. Many boards are working to develop and analyze trend data to effect greater understanding of the challenges involved with improving high school completion rates. Several suggestions were made for improving the assistance Alberta Learning might be able to provide to school boards.

RESULTS ACHIEVED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

AERRs were reviewed to assess the degree of compliance over time with reporting of specific performance measures by school boards. The results of this analysis are reported in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 – Inclusion of Required Performance Measures in AERRs*

Results Measure	Percent 1997-1998 (n=60)	Percent 1998-1999 (n=60)	Percent 1999-2000 (n=60)	Percent 2000-2001 (n=62)
1. Percentage of students who achieved acceptable standard/standard of excellence on provincial achievement tests:				Total – 100% (excluding home ed.)
• Based on those writing (5 years of data)	93%	90%	92%	92%
• Based on cohort (5 years of data)	N/A	58%	70%	74%
2. Percentage of students who achieved acceptable standard/standard of excellence on diploma exams.	97%	88%	95%	94%
3. Percentage of students who achieved jurisdiction targets on provincial achievement tests and diploma exams (explicitly stated).	N/A	67%	73%	89%
4. Participation rates: percentage of students in grades 3, 6 and 9 who wrote provincial achievement tests and participation of students in diploma exam courses:				
• Achievement tests	85%	98%	95%	97%
• Diploma Exams	93%	92%	90%	90%
5. Local measures* for local goals reported on	42%	75%	68%	56%

*Local goals are optional, but measures are required if local goals are identified.

The set of provincial goals were revised in the 2000-03 Alberta Learning Business Plan; and the results of reporting on the new provincial goals and local goals are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4 – Reporting / Assessing Results on Provincial and Local Goals (62 Jurisdictions)

Goals:	Performance measures reported	Assessment of the results				
		Imp.*	No change	Decline	Ins. Data*	Mis. Data*
Goal 1: High Quality Learning Opportunities		61%	24%	5%	2%	8%
• Responsive & flexible	97%					
• Accessible	92%					
• Affordable	73%					
Goal 2: Excellence in Learner Achievement		58%	23%	3%	2%	14%
• Provincial measures	See Table 3					
• Other local measures	42%					
• Results on aboriginal students as a distinct group analyzed**	13%					
Goal 3: Well Prepared Learners		73%	14%	2%	3%	8%
• Children start ready to learn	73%					
• Lifelong learning	79%					
• World of Work	81%					
• Citizenship	77%					
Goal 4: Effective Working Relationships with Partners		74%	6%	0%	10%	10%
• Partnerships	92%					
• Joint initiatives	85%					
Local Goals	56% (goals specified + measures reported)	N/A (open-ended question)				

* Abbreviations: Imp. – improvement; Ins. Data – insufficient data; Mis. Data – missing data.
** Not a required measure.

Summary

Responsiveness to the required student achievement measures (Table 3) has either improved or stabilized at a high level (over 90%), although compliance should be 100%. Reporting of local goals and performance measures was lower (only 56% of jurisdictions reported local goals and measures in 2000-01 AERRs compared to 68% in 1999-00).

Assessment of the results achieved for each of the goals was a new addition to the 2000-01 AERR summary forms. As illustrated in Table 4, more than half of jurisdictions indicated improvement in results on the goals, Goal 2 showing the lowest level of improvement (58% of jurisdictions) and Goals 3 and 4 indicating the highest level of improvement (73 and 74 percent respectively). Approximately a quarter or less of the jurisdictions reported no change in the results for the provincial goals and a small proportion reported decline in the results or insufficient data. See Table 18 and the related discussion for a more detailed analysis of the most problematic measures for school boards.

GOAL 1 – HIGH QUALITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

As shown in Table 4, 61% of jurisdictions assessed the results for Goal 1 as improvement. Congruent with these data, jurisdictions' comments on the results for Goal 1 were generally optimistic relative to results achieved. There were many accounts of satisfactory results and successes in different areas. Table 5 illustrates the major themes identified from the content analysis of comments.

Table 5 – Jurisdictions' Comments on the Results for Goal 1

Themes that emerged from the jurisdictions' comments:	N of Comments
Meeting students' needs (creating a "student-oriented" learning environment) (positive comments and areas for further improvement)	23
Affordability	20
Parental satisfaction (mostly positive)	18

Meeting students' needs generated the maximum number of comments on Goal 1. While there were accounts of accomplishments (i.e., high parent/student satisfaction), some issues were articulated, namely, further improvement of quality of teaching and diversification of programming. Remarks on various aspects of affordability indicated that situations in this area varied among the jurisdictions. While some comments were positive and indicative of jurisdictions' successes in "keeping education affordable and being financially prudent", a substantial proportion of comments reflected various fiscal issues, such as student fee levels. Jurisdictions attached much importance to achieving high levels of parental satisfaction including areas such as: district programs, access to services for special needs students, the safe and caring atmosphere in schools, and home education.

GOAL 2 – EXCELLENCE IN LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT

Overall jurisdictions commented much more on successes in attaining provincial Goal 2 (40 districts) than on issues and areas for improvement (see Table 6). As illustrated in Table 4 above, in general, the results should be considered to be positive, because 58% of jurisdictions improved their results and very small proportions (3 and 2 percent) indicated a decline or insufficient data. "No change" response (23%) can bear a positive connotation for some jurisdictions, indicating that good/satisfactory results have been already achieved. The districts reported the following successes in student achievement:

- good results in relation to the provincial standards;
- progress (i.e., having "promising" trend data) or achieving satisfactory results in specific contexts and circumstances;
- improvement/success in all of schooling/subject areas or in selected grades or sub-groups of students.

Achievement Issues and Reporting Results

Concerns about relatively weak student performance at the junior high and high school level, particularly in Grade 9 (generally or in individual subjects) and reporting results for specific programs or groups of students clearly stand out among other issues and concerns expressed by the jurisdictions (Table 6). In addition, some jurisdictions expressed concern about students' achievement in mathematics.

Table 6 - Jurisdictions' Comments on Student Achievement – Areas for Improvement

Sample Comments:	N
• The Grade 3 results are very good. There are some issues with Grade 6 results and even though the Grade 9 results show improvement, the results are not high enough yet.	15
• Provincial Achievement Tests for I.O.P. Grade 9 students need to reflect the I.O.P. curriculum and on-line students should be reported separately.	11

According to the jurisdictions, socio-economic factors affect the achievement results (in all grades), and within the jurisdiction, performance fluctuations in Grade 9 and up may be attributed to relatively small numbers of students. Jurisdictions specified the following strategies for handling the achievement issues:

- analyzing results, identifying reasons for the decline and strategies for improvement;
- changing targets to more realistic ones in light of recent performance;
- having a curriculum coordinator or subject specialist/consultant to address issues and support work of schools; and,
- offering Saturday sessions to high school students to help them prepare for diploma exams.

Local Performance Measures Reported by Jurisdictions

Examples of local performance measures for Goal 2 are included in Table 7. Roughly equal numbers of jurisdictions (around 9) specified achievement-related and satisfaction measures. The jurisdictions used PAT results and other achievement tests for "local needs" (e.g., "to address deficiencies and increase overall performance"). In addition, measures such as percentage of schools that improved results in mathematics and/or in Grades 6, 9 and 12 provide useful jurisdiction-wide information on the overall progress in key areas for improvement. Based on a limited number of available examples, and consistent with jurisdictions' comments on Goal 1, parent satisfaction tended to be a priority.

Table 7 - Local Performance Measures

Type of Measures	Sample Measures
Achievement – related measures	• PATs and diploma examinations – assessing them to address deficiencies and increase overall performance. • Percentage of the jurisdiction's secondary schools that improved results in student achievement in mathematics. • Percentage of the jurisdiction's schools that achieve improved results at the grade 6, 9 and 12 levels. • International Baccalaureate Program Exams • Highest Level of Achievement Tests (HLAT) • Student results in Advanced Placement • % of students in ECS to Grade 2 reading at grade level (NME) • % of ELI and ESL students who meet the acceptable standard for their grade level.
Measures of satisfaction – parents, students and teachers	• Parent satisfaction with school overall, the quality of education offered, variety and challenge in classroom activities, and with (addressing) special needs. • Percentage of parents who agreed teachers help students achieve learning expectations and high standards. • Parent/student/teacher satisfaction with the use of computers to deliver curriculum objectives. • Teacher satisfaction with in-service opportunities. Success of staff is celebrated.
Other measures	• Number of Rutherford Scholarships to attend post-secondary schools.

SCHOOLS WITH RESULTS BELOW PROVINCIAL STANDARD

In follow-up discussions with Alberta Learning staff, school boards listed 86 schools (out of over 1500) with results below provincial standard. Nineteen jurisdictions reported having no schools with "overall results that are consistently below the provincial standard" or declined to discuss specific schools. Based on the data available, on average, there were 1 – 2 schools with the mentioned results per jurisdiction, with the minimum of 0 schools and maximum of 8 schools. Normally jurisdictions referred to schools' performance for the last 3 – 5 years and usually only *specific curriculum areas* in the listed schools were below provincial standards (Table 8). According to the comments available, math 9 was the leading issue and a priority for improvement.

Table 8 - Areas with Results Below Provincial Standards

Areas that needed improvement	N of times mentioned	%
Math grade 9	18	29%
Biology 30	8	13%
Chemistry 30	7	11%
Math 30	5	8%
Social Studies 30	5	8%
English 33	5	8%

As illustrated in Table 9, jurisdictions identified a number of strategies to improve students' results and support learners in need.

Table 9 – Jurisdictions' Strategies to Improve Student Results and Help Students in Need

Strategies	N	Sample Activities
Analyzing the results, creating an action plan	44	• Analyzing results, identifying priorities at the jurisdiction /school level (e.g., math as a district-wide priority) and putting an "action plan" in place to implement specific goals. • System support to schools is important (i.e., districts assisting schools in analyzing the results, determining possible reasons for these results and developing plans and strategies to address student achievement).
Utilizing additional resources through various initiatives and programs	21	• Utilizing AISI to address various priorities and needs, such as: - literacy and readiness (for school) and reading comprehension projects; - increasing funding for extra programming; - addressing the achievement issues including junior/senior high math (e.g., teachers in-service and purchasing of computer software); - projects targeting transient population; and - maintaining students attendance and working with families • Other initiatives and programs: SHIP, ELI, Literacy Across the Grades Program, Native Education Project and so on
Different forms of teacher support	15	• Offering professional development (e.g., an assortment of in-services, academic upgrading and training for young teachers) • Developing various forms of teacher cooperation and sharing of experience, e.g.: - connecting teachers in "weak" areas with teachers in areas of superior performance; - using lead teachers "to assist where needed;" - moving proven teachers into struggling schools and - putting in place the "survival kit" mentoring package.

RESULTS FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

Alberta Learning asked jurisdiction staff about reporting results separately for Aboriginal students. As shown in Table 10, only eight jurisdictions (13%) analyzed results for Aboriginal students as a distinct group. The major reason for this is that many jurisdictions have or no Aboriginal students. In their comments eleven jurisdictions acknowledged that "this is an area requiring improvement" and hence, there is a need for tracking and analyzing the academic achievement and resulting needs of Aboriginal students.

Jurisdictions indicated 2 major approaches to addressing achievement issues for this specific group:

- Utilizing resources / services of the Native Education Project (NEP) and other programs / initiatives (such as a Youth Education Initiative, early literacy programs, AISI, etc.), and
- Introducing Aboriginal learning resources into classrooms and assessing the programs.

Role of the Native Education Project in Helping Aboriginal Students Achieve Provincial Standards

Forty-four school boards have funded Native Education Projects (NEP). The largest group of comments referred to the role of the NEP and Aboriginal liaison workers in helping students succeed. As illustrated in Table 10, the NEP covered various aspects of learning and related issues. Based on the comments, the majority of jurisdictions had supports for Aboriginal students (at least at selected schools) and the accounts were predominantly positive, indicating that the NEP was working.

Table 10 – Role of the Native Education Project in Helping Students Achieve Provincial Standards

NEP -Type of Support	N	Sample Services / Activities
Services / supports to students	18	• improving nutrition/lunch programs; • improving achievement, literacy and numeracy skills; • working on student attendance and retention; • working on integration of Aboriginal students into regular classes; • helping with social skills, social-emotional issues.
Providing programming and counseling, including culturally relevant programs	12	• tutoring program; • homework monitoring programs; • career counseling; • teaching Aboriginal languages; • a multicultural program delivered by an Aboriginal teacher; • native teacher developing the units;
Establishing home-school liaison / providing support / services to families	11	• helping with family focus on the importance of education; • providing information to parents; • providing information on student placement and applicable resources.
Developing cultural awareness in students	8	• cultural camps; • celebrating and developing cultural awareness; • involving elders in celebrations; • building appreciation of Aboriginal culture; • improving Aboriginal students sense of cultural identity; helping students improve cultural esteem;
Providing support to schools/ teachers	6	• providing professional/leadership development to teachers; • counseling/assistance to teachers.

Desired Supports from Alberta Learning to Improve Results for Aboriginal Students

Jurisdictions identified several ways that Alberta Learning could assist them to improve results for Aboriginal students (see details in Table 11):

Table 11 – Desired Supports from Alberta Learning

Type of Support	N	Sample Activities
Continue supports, such as programming and reaching to / assisting the families	13	• Continue to support/expand the Native Education Project. • Pleased with services/need more support from the Aboriginal Services Branch. • Providing early literacy and late literacy programs to deal specifically with Aboriginal students groupings and to provide one on one tutoring. • Assistance with cultural experiences. • The provision of program support in the area of Native Studies. • Work with Children's Services to continue early intervention and support of Aboriginal families. Support school lunch program. • Focus on coordinated delivery of services to address home environment problems.
Do research / Share information	10	• Share best/successful practices • Facilitate the implementation of recommendations arising from the Native Education Review. • AL needs to look at how it can support research and program development for Aboriginal education – like the Rainbow Spirit Project. • Provide comparative data for Band operated and other school jurisdictions with high Aboriginal populations. • Break out the results information for us as you do with Hutterite schools. • AL could assist by collecting meaningful assessment data on Aboriginal students and sharing it with the jurisdiction.

GOAL 3 – WELL PREPARED LEARNERS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, WORLD OF WORK AND CITIZENSHIP

In total, 73% of jurisdictions reported improvement of the results for Goal 3 (see Table 4). Individual accounts of successes included districts' general satisfaction with the results, meeting goals/targets, parent/student satisfaction and various program accomplishments. It could be inferred from the jurisdictions' comments that successes in implementing Goal 3 are linked to innovative programming and developing partnerships with the community (Table 12). (See also Goal 4).

Working on Various Initiatives/Programs and Developing Partnerships

Twenty-seven jurisdictions (44%) emphasized providing one or both of two types of programs targeting "students of various abilities and backgrounds" (Table 12). First, the programs encompassed different forms of "early intervention" to ensure students' success *at different stages* of their learning. Activities ranged from pre-school assessment/programming and preparing students for school through kindergarten to offering programs in primary grades (e.g., developing school-based plans to improve literacy for "at-risk" students in K-2). Second, programming targeted graduates' preparedness for life in the "real world" (i.e., work, post-secondary and citizenship programs). Both types of programs involved community partnerships. While many jurisdictions reported successes, some indicated the need for further effort/improvement to meet students' needs.

Table 12 - Jurisdictions' Comments on Results for Goal 3

Themes	N	Sample Programs - Activities
Programming / counseling / courses: • maintaining • adding • expanding	27	• Pre-school (early) assessment and programming (e.g., identifying pre-school children with special needs, PUF and Headstart programming); • Various initiatives and programs in kindergarten preparing students for Grade 1; • Literacy and numeracy (e.g., ELI, Early Reading Intervention Initiative, etc.); • Programs in primary grades are having a very positive impact on student learning; • District technology plan / Technology integration; • Programming for gifted students (i.e., homogeneous classes); • Focusing on learning needs of native students; • CTS and off-campus courses maintain interest in school / (High school) students taking postsecondary courses or working; • RAP, Green Certificate, Tech Prep, Career Transition and work experience; • Citizenship and contributions to society (e.g., volunteering, community service); • Counseling at all levels; career counseling and support; • Drug and alcohol education programs.
Partnerships	12	• Working with partners to help children start school ready to learn • Partnerships to improve students' transitions to the world of work (e.g., RAP, Careers the Next Generation, Career Transitions Program and so on); • Partnerships with businesses for off-campus programming; • Post-secondary institutions are invited into schools for information sharing events; • Partnerships with post-secondary institutions, such as Northern Lake College and Grant McEwan College;

GOAL 4 – EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS

Seventy-four percent of jurisdictions assessed the results achieved for Goal 4 as "improvement" (see Table 4). They shared the opinion that partnerships "are critical," "make a difference" for students and teachers and "provide important services and programs." This, along with a broad spectrum of joint ventures (Table 13), attests to the jurisdictions taking an interest in "finding ways to serve students" through both internal and external partnerships. A number of districts reported developing multiple initiatives.

Table 13 - Jurisdictions' Comments on Partnerships (Goal 4)

Partnerships	N	Examples
Partnerships with Businesses and Communities	16	• Partnering with businesses, such as: Trans Canada pipeline (contributes to lunch program), gas plants (financial and personnel support), Northeast Capital Industrial Association and DOW Chemical (curriculum partnerships), TELUS (Learning Connection). • Partnering with community-based and other organizations, such as: YMCA, Family and Community Support Services, Child and Family Services Authority, Foster Parents Association, Big Sisters and Big Brothers, Parenting for the Future, Victim Services, and John Howard Society (attempts to keep 13-16 year olds at school). • Partnering with post-secondary institutions, such as: Grant McEwan College and Athabasca University (teachers and assistants' professional development), U of L and U of C. • Other examples: - received $30,000 of educational materials through corporate donations; - local business and community groups provide scholarships; - 28 businesses maintain partnerships with 7 schools; - a number of excellent partnerships are in place, e.g., Career Education, Partners for Science, Cisco Networking Program, Student Health; - maintain the Native Education Project / partnerships with First Nations.

Table 13 - Jurisdictions' Comments on Partnerships (Goal 4) Continued

Partnerships	N	Examples
Partnerships with public sector and other agencies	14	• Student Health Initiative Program (SHIP) • Regional Health Authorities • Alberta Mental Health • RCMP • Continuing Education Council • Curriculum agreements with ADLC and AL
Partnerships with other districts	6	• Curriculum partnerships between Catholic and public jurisdictions. • Joint, inter-jurisdiction initiatives on technology and professional development; sharing liaison workers and a behavior consultant.

LOCAL GOALS

Fifty-six percent of 62 jurisdictions specified local goals (see Table 4). These goals fell mainly in the following major categories: (1) high quality of education and teaching, (2) safety, healthiness and supportiveness of schools' learning environments, (3) infrastructure and budgeting matters and (4) districts' responsiveness and accountability (Table 14). Some goals were formulated more like strategies.

Table 14 – Local Goals (36 jurisdictions listed local goals)

Targeted Area(s)	N of Districts	Sample Goals
Quality of teaching/education and staff-related goals	14	• Teaching is consistently of high quality. • Staff is satisfied with: - the opportunities for input in the district decision making; - the support received from the district to do their job; - the opportunities for professional growth; - the district as a place to work. • New programs are implemented and existing ones assessed for suitability. • (Develop) support program for staff (e.g., long-term PD). • Improve support programs for students (e.g., counseling, special needs). • Available resources are maximized. • Teachers and staff routinely use appropriate technology. • Students stay in school.
Learning environment is safe, healthy, supportive and productive	6	• Safe and caring schools • Safe, supportive, productive work environment • Safe and Caring District
Infrastructure and Finances	6	• Provide appropriate facilities / transportation system. • Each school has a complete local area network for all learning/administrative areas. • Revenues increased as a result of enrollment growth, course completions, matching technology grants and program service fees. • Schools operated within their assigned site-based budgets. • Staff satisfied with their knowledge and involvement in school budgeting.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SPECIFIC GROUPS OF STUDENTS

School jurisdictions report on the progress and achievements of specific groups of students related to provincial initiatives, including the Early Literacy Initiative, English as a Second Language programs, Special needs programs and on the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) projects. School board superintendents were asked, "Overall, what is your assessment of the results achieved for these students," and "what do your results for this student group tell you?" The responses to these two questions are summarized in Table 15.

Table 15 – Program Area Results and Implications

Student Group	Results (%)*	Implications
Early Literacy Measure reported Yes *51* No *11*	Measures indicate Improvement = 76% No change = 6% Decline = 0% Insufficient data = 15% No response = 3%	• Many boards indicated student achievement was improving, that students were getting help earlier, that projects were stimulating interest in reading, but that gains were not all measured by provincial achievement tests.
English as a Second Language (ESL) Measure reported Yes *41* No *21*	Measures indicate Improvement = 52% No change = 15% Decline = 0% Insufficient data = 23% No response = 11%	• Small student numbers restricted reporting on ESL student achievement for a number of boards, but approximately 20 boards commented specifically on being pleased with improving levels of student achievement.
Special Needs Measure reported Yes *53* No *9*	Measures indicate Improvement = 79% No change = 6% Decline = 0% Insufficient data = 6% No response = 8%	• One-third of the school boards commented on the continuing attention they are giving this program area, with many of the same boards commenting on improving parent satisfaction or student achievement. Fewer boards (14) than in past reports commented on cost pressures or increasing demand.
Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Measure reported Yes *52* No *10*	Measures indicate Improvement = 82% No change = 2% Decline = 0% Insufficient data = 11% No response = 5%	• Forty-nine boards explicitly commented on the popularity or positive results being achieved with the AISI projects. Only eight boards noted challenges associated with tracking results or implementing projects.

* In some cases percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Summary

School board representatives perceive AISI projects are the most successful in serving special groups of students, followed by programs serving students with special needs, Early Literacy programs and ESL programs.

MIRS REPORT

In October 2001 Alberta Learning published the second in a series of Management Information Reports. One purpose of these reports is to "...allow Alberta Learning to refine the analysis of timely information about the implementation and impact of [special] programs." During the Spring 2002, school board staff were asked about the usefulness of the MIRS Report and their own experiences with program evaluation data collection. This input is summarized in Table 16.

Table 16 – MIRS Report

Usefulness (%)*	Program Evaluation Challenges
Was the MIRS Report Useful? Yes *35%* No *29%* *Missing data 35%*	• Nine respondents indicated they did not receive the MIRS report or there was insufficient time or other resources to permit use of the report. Key challenges cited included that of compiling meaningful and consistent data at the jurisdiction level due to cost and/or staff demands. No clear patterns regarding ways to improve program evaluation data were identified.

* In some cases percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Summary

Program evaluation relating to achievement of students served by special programs remains a challenging area for Alberta Learning and school boards.

CAPITAL PROJECTS AND FINANCIAL REPORTING

School board AERRs were reviewed to determine if the reports included the required highlights related to capital and facilities projects and for financial information. These details are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17- Board Compliance with Capital and Fiscal Reporting Requirements

Highlights on major facilities projects Reported Yes *79%* No *21%*
Indications how these projects support or enhance learning for students Reported Yes *66%* No *31%* Missing data *3%*
Spending summary for the year based on AFS Reported Yes *95%* No *3%* Missing data *2%*
Information on obtaining budget details Reported Yes *92%* No *8%*

CEU IMPLEMENTATION

Oversight of school level CEU administration by central office staff was described in general terms in the field interviews with superintendents or their representatives. While respondents indicated CEU administration was a serious topic in the administrative relationship between central office and school administration specific audit procedures were largely absent in the procedural descriptions.

Issue identification and suggestions for assistance centered on the complexity of CEU administration and strong recommendations were made for more advance notification of any changes in the high school funding structures; and calls were forthcoming for more in-service support by Alberta Learning for appropriate administration and auditing of CEU funding.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF JURISDICTIONS' ACCOUNTABILITY

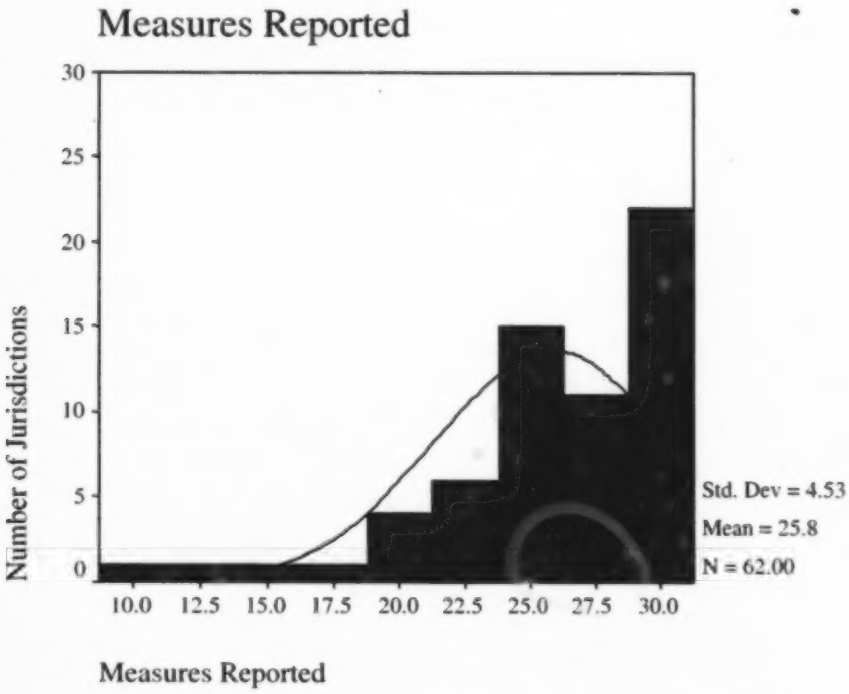
The March 2000 *Guide to School Board Planning and Reporting* specified 31 performance measures be reported for specific goal outcomes, specific groups of students, capital/facilities projects and financial data. If boards have very low or nil numbers of ESL or home education students the maximum number of required measures can range from 29-31. To gauge the degree of congruence between the evaluation and reporting requirements in the *Guide* and the responsiveness of school boards the numbers of required measures actually reported in each board's AERR was calculated and is summarized in Table 18, and graphically displayed in Figure 1. It should be emphasized that this data is somewhat historical, reflecting the 2000-01 AERRs. Field Services has reported subsequent improvements by boards where required.

Table 18 – Total Accountability Performance Measures Reported by Jurisdiction*

Zone	Jurisdictions	Total Score	Zone	Jurisdictions	Score	Zone	Jurisdictions	Total Score
1	Fort Vermilion	27	2/3	St. Albert Protestant	29	5	Christ the Redeemer	22
1	Peace River	25	2/3	St. Paul	30	5	Foothills	27
1	Northland	21	2/3	Elk Island Public	22	5	Prairie Land	19
1	Holy Family Catholic	30	2/3	Evergreen Catholic	26	5	Golden Hills	29
1	High Prairie	10	2/3	Lakeland Catholic	29	5	Rocky View	30
1	Grand Prairie Catholic	24	2/3	Living Waters	23	6	Medicine Hat Cath	20
1	Grande Prairie Public	30	2/3	Northern Gateway	30	6	Medicine Hat Public	30
1	Peace Wapiti	15	2/3	St. Thomas Aquinas	26	6	Palliser	31
2/3	Elk Island Catholic	25	2/3	Sturgeon	22	6	Prairie Rose	28
2/3	Black Gold	26	2/3	Wetaskiwin	30	6	Westwind	12
2/3	Buffalo Trial	21	2/3	Northern Lights	26	6	Grasslands	30
2/3	East Central AB Cath	28	4	Battle River	28	6	Holy Spirit	28
2/3	Edmonton Catholic	24	4	Chinook's Edge	29	6	Horizon	29
2/3	Edmonton Public	27	4	Clearview	28	6	Lethbridge Public	29
2/3	Aspen View	19	4	Red Deer Public	29	6	Livingstone Range	31
2/3	Fort McMurray Cath.	25	4	Red Deer Catholic	29	F	East Central	26
2/3	Fort McMurray Publ.	30	4	Wild Rose	26	F	Gr. Southern Publ	18
2/3	Grande Yellowhead	25	4	Wolf Creek	28	F	Gr. Southern Cath	25
2/3	Gr. St. Albert Cath	28	5	Canadian Rockies	22	F	Northwest	24
2/3	Parkland	26	5	Calgary Catholic	27	F	Gr. North Central	30
2/3	Pembina Hills	29	5	Calgary Public	30			

* Total measures calculation exclude reporting on local goals. Some jurisdictions indicated some measures as not applicable to them (i.e. home education or ESL) therefore the maximum number of required measures can range from 29-31.

Figure 1 – Distribution of Performance Measures Reporting by Jurisdictions



The most challenging performance measures for jurisdictions are identified in Table 19.

Table 19 - Challenging Performance Measures

Required Performance Measures:	Number of Jurisdictions That:		
	Met the Reporting Requirements	Did not Meet the Reporting Requirements*	Not Applicable**
Goal 1 Outcome: Affordability	45	17	
Goal 2: Reporting on PATs based on cohort	46	16	
Goal 2: Reporting on home education	15	44	3
Goal 3 Outcome: Children start school ready to learn	45	17	
Goal 3 Outcome: Well prepared learners for lifelong learning	49	13	
Goal 3 Outcome: Well prepared learners for citizenship	48	14	
Reporting on ESL	40	20	2
Summarizing results on AISI projects	47	15	
Capital/Facilities Project Summary- highlights progress/completion	49	13	
Capital/Facilities Project Summary-indicates how projects enhance learning	41	19	

* The calculations include both reporting not having related performance measures and missing data.
** Some jurisdictions indicated some measures as not applicable to them (i.e. home education or ESL).

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this report demonstrates continuing improvement of Jurisdictional Annual Educational Results Reports (AERR's).

1. When asked to sum up their overall assessment of the AERR and identify future challenges and implications for the 2002-05 education plan, jurisdiction representatives spoke about planning in relationship to new goals, but also identified six specific issues that included, in order of frequency:

    a. Improving achievement for specific groups of students;
    b. Staffing recruitment or retention;
    c. Maintaining high employee satisfaction in relationship to labor relations challenges;
    d. Developing better measures, data collection, and trend analysis;
    e. Improving special education program delivery;
    f. Providing professional development on pedagogical skills and/or curriculum knowledge including ICT.

2. Several areas were identified where improvements to the AERR's were needed[1], specifically:
    a. Eleven jurisdictions, as indicated in Table 18, reported on between 20 and 24 of 31 required performance measures and six jurisdictions reported on 19 or fewer of 31 required performance measures.
    b. Ten performance measures, described in Table 19, have been identified as falling far short of reporting requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are intended to support the implementation of accountability requirements, bearing in mind that accountability is much more than just an exercise in accounting. The information resulting from the AERR process is beneficial to the board, its employees and the learning community, as the board works towards continuous improvement and improved learning.

Recommendation 1 – Alberta Learning and jurisdictions consider the six challenges listed above in the research and development activities underlying their future education planning.

Recommendation 2 - Alberta Learning engage key stakeholders to investigate appropriate provincial "supports" and "pressures" to ensure full implementation of AERR reporting requirements and to develop policy to address jurisdictional non-compliance with ministerial reporting requirements. This policy review should include Field Services developing a process to recognize effective evaluation/reporting and to address needs in any jurisdiction that has a pattern of incomplete evaluation/reporting.

Recommendation 3 – Alberta Learning investigate why 10 measures are under-reported, and make recommendations for improving reporting in these areas and/or the measures.

[1] Although Alberta Learning staff followed up with school jurisdictions on each of the missing required performance measures, in many instances improvements to the AERR's could only be made in a subsequent year. Therefore, future summary reports will continue to review compliance with reporting requirements.